

**Gajendra
Storybook
Instructions
and
Worksheets**

Teacher's guide for "Gajendra, King of the Elephants"

Including the cover, the Gajendra book that the children will make is 8 pages long. If you are doing this as a project for the prayer session, plan accordingly and have students complete a page each week. Below are the instructions for each page. The teacher should keep all the completed pages and on the final day the booklets can be assembled.

Cover: Copy the covers onto white or a light colored card stock. Children should write their names next to "Illustrated by..." Allow them to decorate the covers as they like, either with original drawings or with stickers, etc.

Page 1: Let students color the picture with colored pencils, crayons or markers. They can put glitter and sequins on the banks of the lake to represent the gems. Golden lotuses can be cut from gold foil or from gold stickers and glued in the water.

Page 2: First, color Gajendra sitting in the water. Then using blue fabric paint for a 3-dimensional effect, students can put dots of water spraying out of Gajendra's trunk. They can also trace the lines of the waves in the water with the fabric paint. If they want, they can draw the other elephants getting sprayed. (Do this before using the fabric paint.) Fabric paint takes a long time to dry thoroughly, so place papers where they won't be disturbed

Page 3: Color the picture. Then glue green sequins along the crocodile's back.

Page 4: Make a pattern of a small lotus flower. Children can trace the pattern onto pink construction paper and cut it out. Attach a stem, cut from green construction paper. After coloring the picture of Gajendra, glue the lotus flower as if he is holding it in his trunk. Inside the bubble, the children can write Gajendra's prayer, "*om namo bhagavate vasudevaya*".

Page 5: Students will place the four items in Vishnu's hands. Starting at the top left hand and going clockwise, have them draw in a disc, conchshell, club and lotus flower. They can be drawn in or cut out of construction paper and

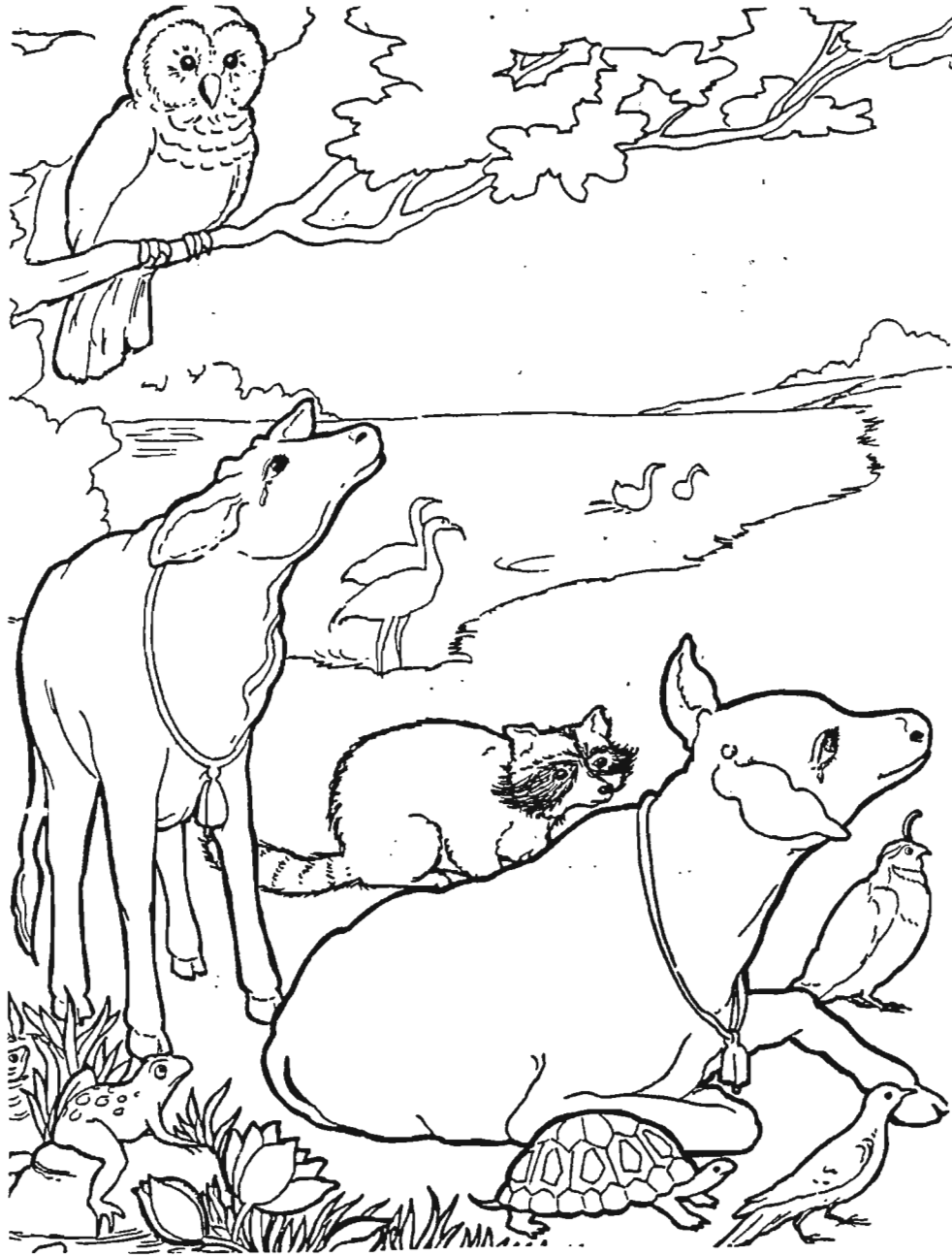
pasted on. The students can then draw the head of the crocodile on the ground. Have them also draw the water or other background.

For the sky, glue puffy clouds made from cotton balls (pulled apart). Very small silk flowers can be used to glue on as if flowers are showering from the clouds or they can use small flower stickers.

Page 6: Students color the picture. For the hut, they can place toothpicks side-by-side to cover the roof. Bits of dried grass or straw can be glued to the walls of the hut.

Page 7: Students can draw an appropriate picture for this page themselves. Possibilities: The king meditating and the Muni looking on angrily; the Muni surrounded by his many disciples; the Muni issuing the curse; the king dying and taking his next birth as an elephant.

Finishing the book: Have the children put their finished pages in order with the cover in front and another piece of card stock for the back cover. Staple along the left side like a book.

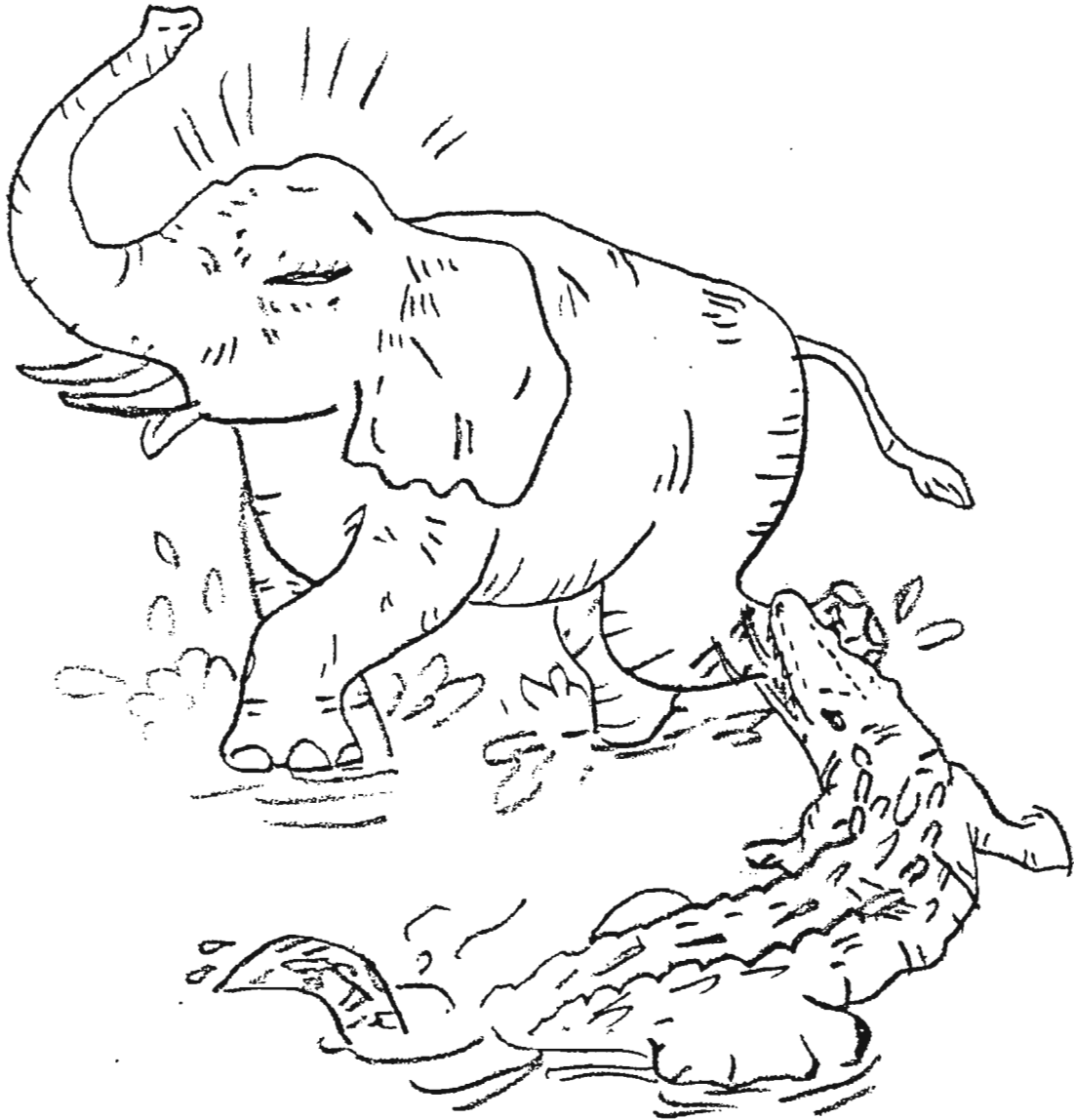


I would like to tell you of a land very far away from here. It is a land where the heavenly beings go to enjoy themselves. In that land there is a gigantic mountain surrounded by an ocean of milk. Imagine that! So much milk that it creates a whole ocean! There you will find a beautiful mountain, with gardens filled with fruits and flowers. Lakes with golden lotuses, swans, cranes and other graceful birds add to its beauty. Many jungle animals roam the mountain and birds chirp with sweet voices. The beaches of the lakes and rivers are covered with small gems that seem like grains of sand. The water is as clear as crystal and has a wonderful fragrance due to the devas bathing in it.



One time, long ago, the leader of the elephants, Gajendra, wandered to the lake along with the rest of his herd. They were attracted by the sweet aroma of the lotuses and all the elephants were very tired and thirsty. Gajendra entered the lake, and the cold, clear water refreshed him completely. He filled his trunk with water and sprayed it over his wives and children who were also bathing in the lake.

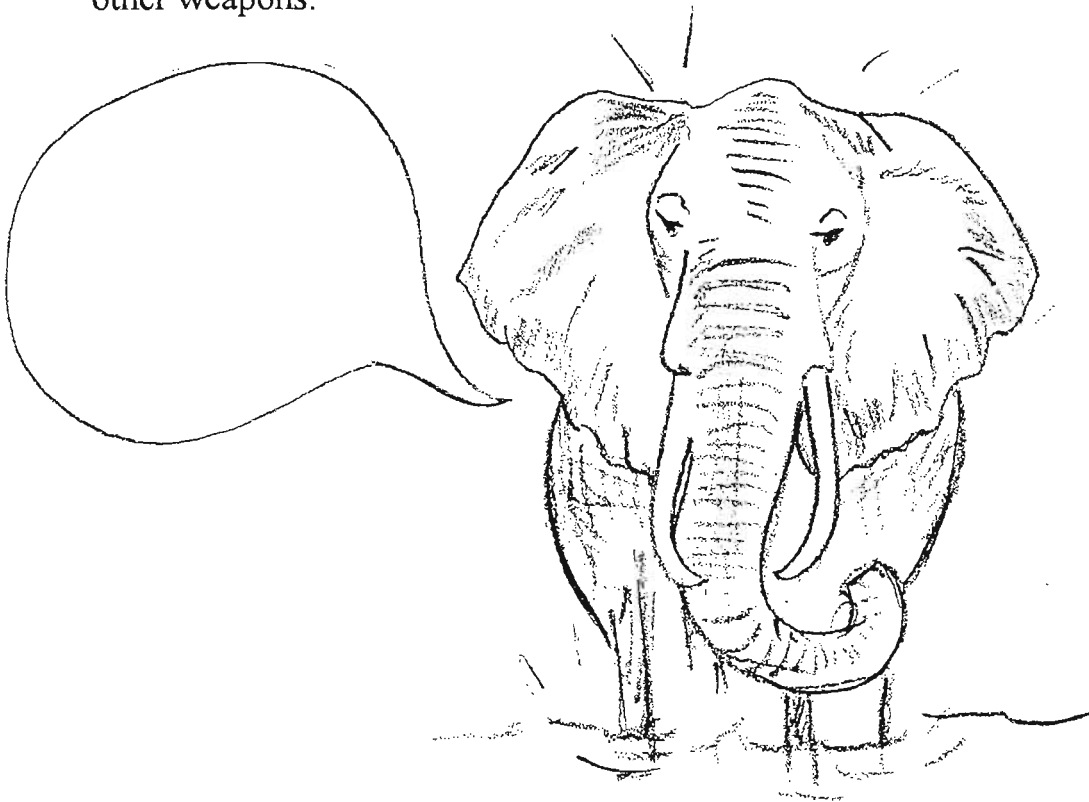
Suddenly a strong crocodile attacked the elephant's leg in the water. Gajendra tried his best to escape the dangerous crocodile but the crocodile held fast to his leg. His wives, worried and crying, joined the other elephants and tried to pull him from behind. But they were no match for the strong crocodile.



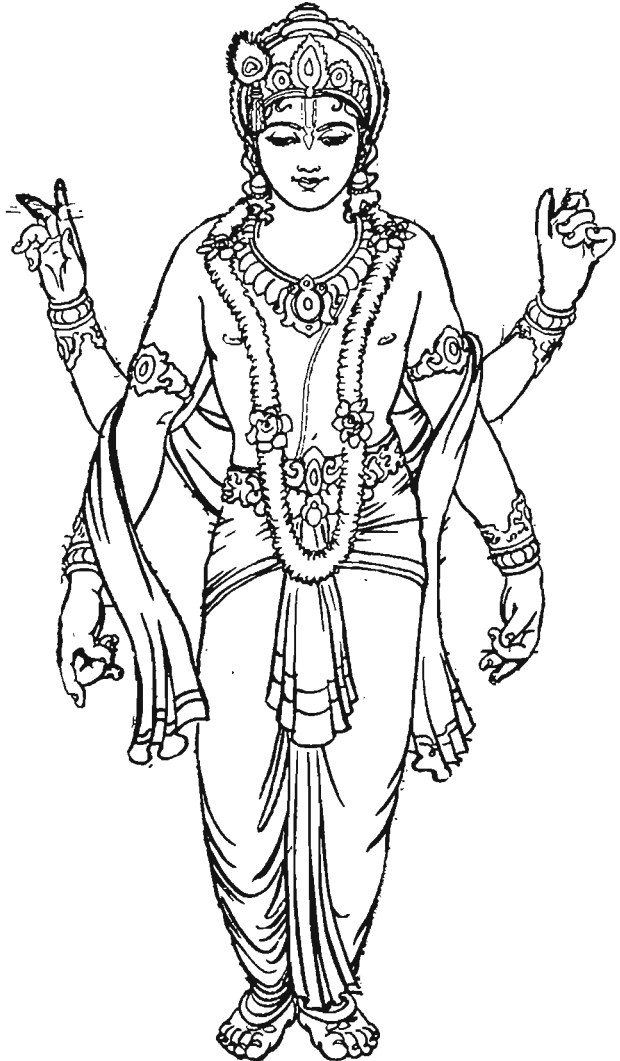
The elephant and the crocodile fought and fought, pulling each other in and out of the water. They continued fighting for one thousand years! Gajendra became tired after so many long years of fighting and began to weaken. But because the crocodile is an animal of the water, he gained strength and power during the fight.

When the king of elephants realized how helpless he was, he knew that he could not save himself. He thought for a long time and decided, “My other elephant friends and relatives couldn’t save me from this awful danger. They were no help at all. It is my fate that I have been attacked by the crocodile. I must pray to the Supreme Personality of Godhead who is the shelter of everyone! I surrender unto the Lord.”

Then the King of the elephants fixed his mind on the Lord and chanted a mantra that he learned in his past life. He chanted, “*om namo bhagavate vasudevaya...* I offer my respectful obeisances unto the Supreme Person, Vasudeva.” Gajendra went on offering many prayers of praise and surrender to Krishna. The Lord, hearing Gajendra’s prayers, appeared before Gajendra. He was on the back of His carrier, Garuda, and was carrying His disc and other weapons.



When Gajendra saw the Lord, he was in a lot of pain, but he immediately plucked a lotus flower with his trunk and offered it to Krishna. With great difficulty he murmured, “O my Lord, master of the universe, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You.”



Seeing Gajendra in so much pain, the Lord got down from Garuda and pulled the elephant, along with the crocodile, out of the water. With all the demigods watching in amazement, He then cut the crocodile's mouth from his body with His disc. Gajendra, the King of the elephants, was saved. The demigods and heavenly beings danced and sang and showered flowers from the sky, all the time praising the Lord.

Now you may wonder how it is that an elephant would know a mantra. Let me tell you of the interesting history of the king of elephants.

In his last life, Gajendra had been a king in South India. He was a devotee of the Lord and his name was Indradyumna Maharaj. King Indradyumna had left his kingdom and retired to the forest where he had a small hut. He was very austere and always engaged in worshipping the Lord.



Once Indradyumna Maharaj had taken a vow of silence and was deeply meditating on the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The great sage Agastya Muni and many of his disciples arrived at his place. When Agyasta Muni saw the king sitting silently outside, not offering him a good welcome, he became very angry.

The Muni said, “This king is not a gentleman! He seems to be ignorant and uneducated. He has insulted me by not receiving me properly! Therefore, since he is acting like a big, dull animal, I curse him to take his next birth as a dull, dumb elephant!”

After cursing King Indradyumna, the sage and his disciples left. Since the king was a devotee, he accepted whatever happened to him as being the desire of the Lord. So he was not angry. Even though in his next life he got the body of an elephant, because of all the devotional service he had done, he remembered how to worship and offer prayers to the Lord. In his life as Gajendra, those prayers liberated him. Now we can understand the value of prayer.